

TORONTO UNIVERSITY STUDIES  
IN  
POLITICAL SCIENCE

W. J. ASHLEY, Editor.

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FIRST SERIES. No. III.

THE CONDITIONS OF FEMALE LABOUR  
IN ONTARIO.

BY

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TORONTO:  
PRINTED BY WARWICK & SONS, 68 & 70 FRONT STREET WEST.  
1892.

*Copies of this Essay may be obtained on application to the Education Department for Ontario,  
Toronto.*

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## PREFACE.

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It is appropriate that the first contribution to the University of Toronto Studies in Political Science from a lady graduate should concern itself with the labour of women and children in Ontario. It is to such careful examination by competent observers of the actual facts of industrial life, rather than to hasty and sentimental agitation, that we must look for permanent reform.

The existing Factory Acts of Ontario are in some respects more stringent, in others more lax, than those of England, the parent of factory legislation. Taking the two essential points, the *age* of permissible child labour and the *hours* of employment for women and children, the comparison may be stated as follows:—

1. In Ontario the age of legal employment is for boys twelve and for girls fourteen. In England it has hitherto been for both sexes as low as ten; but by the recent Act,—which will not, it is true, come into complete operation till the end of 1893,—the limit has been raised to eleven. The Berlin Labour Conference of 1890 recommended twelve. But while in Ontario boys over twelve are permitted to work as long hours as adult women, in England children between ten and thirteen (the age at which the school authority practically ceases) are only permitted to work “half-time,” (and that only on passing a certain school standard, which however the great majority of them have no difficulty in doing at about the age of ten). The English practice is in substantial agreement with the recommendation of the Berlin Conference, that children should not be employed for a longer period than six hours daily, with a minimum interval of half an hour, (though this recommendation applies to children under fourteen, while the English half-time rule only applies to those under thirteen).

An Ontario Statute of 1891 does, indeed, enact that all children between eight and fourteen years of age shall attend school; but until the local authorities make a serious attempt to enforce the Act, it cannot be regarded as substantially affecting the situation.

2. With regard to the hours of labour of women and young persons the general result of the English legislation is a working week of fifty-six and a half hours in textile factories, and sixty hours in non-textile factories and workshops, while in Ontario the limit of hours is sixty.

Two minor points of contrast are also of interest:

3. Night labour for women and children has for some years been expressly prohibited in England, and the Berlin Conference recommended that this example

should be generally followed. It is not yet prohibited in Ontario. Of course the cases in which night work is attempted are at present very rare.

4. The legislation of Germany, Hungary and Switzerland imposes restrictions on the employment of women for a certain period after child-bearing, and the Berlin Conference recommended their exclusion for four weeks. The recent English statute has carried out the suggestion, providing that "an occupier of a factory or workshop shall not knowingly allow a woman to be employed therein within four weeks after she has given birth to a child," (54-55 Vict. cap. 75, s. 17). The number of married women employed in factories in Ontario has hitherto been so small that no crying evils have appeared. But for the very reason that the number is small, it might be wise to introduce the rule now that it can cause but little distress or inconvenience. There are, no doubt, objections of weight to any such action; but they would seem to be outweighed by the advantages. For a discussion of the subject the reader may be referred to the article by Jevons in the *Contemporary Review* for January, 1882, reprinted in *Methods of Social Reform*.

W. J. A.

## INTRODUCTION.

Victor Hugo has fitly called the present age the "Women's Century"; for although the annals of history have always contained the names of great women yet the position of women as a factor in the economic conditions of social life seems peculiar to recent times.

In this paper some attempt will be made to discuss the conditions under which women are working in the Province of Ontario; referring, perhaps, more particularly to the city of Toronto, which has afforded the most convenient field for observation.

When Harriet Martineau visited America in 1840, she relates that she found only seven employments open to women; namely, teaching, needlework, keeping boarders, working in cotton mills, type-setting, work in book-binderies and household service. Although women still retain their positions in these employments, they have vastly extended the number of their vocations. According to the latest census returns in the United States, women have now secured a footing in 4,467 different branches of various industries. While Ontario can not boast of such large numbers, the various callings entered by women in this Province are rapidly increasing in number. In some cases the establishment of new industries, especially within the last fifteen years, has led to their further employment. In others they have entered fields hitherto, for the most part, occupied by men. New employments are continually opening up with advancing civilization, which require but slight experience and seem adapted for women.

There are various reasons why women are ready for the numerous occupations which are continually offering themselves. In a large number of instances, circumstances make it a matter of necessity for them to earn their living. Often a desire to live up to a certain standard of comfort will lead girls, for a short time at least, to go into employments in which, while living at home, they can partially support themselves, or at least supply themselves with pin-money. Again, the social conditions of life in Canada are such that women find it necessary to prepare themselves for emergencies: they often begin to learn some occupation so as to be prepared for future risks, and then their circumstances change and the occupation becomes a permanent one.

For these and other reasons we find a large and increasing number of women employed as wage-earners; and Ontario, following the example of older countries, has found it necessary to subject their labour to various restrictions in order to protect the interests of society.

Since the subject of child labour is intimately connected, both in factory law and inspection, with that of the employment of women, it has been discussed in connection therewith in this paper.

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# THE CONDITIONS OF FEMALE LABOUR IN ONTARIO.

## CHAPTER I.—FEMALE LABOUR UNDER THE FACTORY ACT AND THE SHOPS' REGULATION ACT.

### *Section I.—Legislation in Ontario.*

(1.) The employment of women and girls in *manufacturing* establishments in Ontario is regulated by the Ontario Factory Act of 1884 and the Amendment Act of 1889.

In passing such Acts Ontario was but following the example of older countries. Factory legislation in Great Britain has been in existence for more than half a century, and has been codified by the Factory and Workshops Act of 1878, with subsequent amendments. The example of Great Britain has been followed by other countries; in Europe by Austro-Hungary, in 1859; by France, in 1874; by Switzerland, in 1877; and by Germany, in 1878. In America factory legislation has been of very recent growth, but, although recent, it has been rapid. Massachusetts was the pioneer state in this respect, having passed a Factory Act providing for inspection in 1882. Ohio followed in 1884; so that Ontario compares favourably, in point of time, with the various states of the Union.

The principal sections of the Ontario Factory Acts which are pertinent to this enquiry may be summarized as follows:—

1. Under the word "Factory" only *manufacturing* establishments are included.
2. In order to come under inspection, there must be at least *six* persons employed in a factory.
3. No boy under *twelve* and no girl under *fourteen* shall be employed in any factory.
4. No child (defined as a person under the age of fourteen) or female shall be employed more than *ten* hours in one day, or more than *sixty* hours in one week; unless a different apportionment of the hours of labour per day has been made for the sole purpose of giving a shorter day's work on Saturday.
5. If the inspector so directs, meals shall not be eaten in the work-rooms, but in suitable rooms to be provided for the purpose.
6. Boys under twelve and girls under fourteen may be employed during the months of July, August, September and October in any year in such gathering-in and other preparation of fruits and vegetables for canning or desiccating purposes as may be required to be done prior to the operation of cooking, or other process of that nature requisite in connection with the canning of fruits or vegetables.
7. Employers shall allow each child, young girl and woman not less than one hour at noon of each day for meals, but such hour shall not be reckoned in the ten hours to which labour is restricted.
8. Children and women are not allowed to clean machinery while in motion.
9. Where the exigencies of certain trades require that women should be employed for a longer period than above stated, an inspector may give permission for such exemption, under the following limitations:—(a) No woman, young girl or child shall be employed before six o'clock in the morning, nor after the hour of nine in the evening (i. e., while employed during the day). (b) The hours of labour shall not exceed twelve hours and a-half in any one day, nor more than seventy-two and a-half in any one week. (c) Such exemption shall not comprise more than six weeks in any one year. (d) During the continuance of such exemption, there shall, in addition to the hour for the noon-day meal, be allowed to every woman, young girl or child so employed to an hour later

than seven o'clock, not less than forty-five minutes for another meal between five and eight o'clock in the afternoon. (e) Women only may be employed to a later hour than nine, where the work relates to the canning or desiccating of fruits or vegetables, for twenty days during the summer months.

10. Provision is made for separate conveniences for women, and for the proper ventilation of the work-rooms.

11. A register of the children, young girls and women employed in any factory shall be kept by the employer for the reference of the inspector.

12. Notices of the hours between which children, young girls and women are to be employed shall be hung up in a conspicuous place in the factory.

After the passing of this Act it was found necessary to provide means for seeing that it was carried out, and in 1887 three inspectors were appointed in Ontario under the Act.

As has been intimated, the Factory Act in Ontario deals exclusively with those employed in manufacturing establishments, and not with those in mercantile or mechanical employments.

(2.) The Shops' Regulation Act of 1888, "An Act to regulate the closing of Shops and Hours of Labour therein for Children and Young Persons," supplies this omission to some extent.

The term young person, in this Act, means a boy under *fourteen* or a girl under *sixteen*. Sub-section 3 of section 3 reads as follows:—"A young person shall not be employed in or about a shop for a longer period than 74 hours, including meal times, in any one week; nor shall a young person be employed during any Saturday for more than fourteen hours, including meal times, nor during any other day of the week, for more than twelve hours, including meal times, unless a different apportionment of the hours of labour per day has been made for the sole purpose of giving a shorter day's work for some other day of the week; and there shall be allowed as meal times to every young person so employed not less than one hour for the noon-day meal on each day, and to any young person so employed on any day to any hour later than seven . . . . ., not less than forty-five minutes for another or evening meal between five and eight o'clock in the afternoon." Sub-section 7 of the same section reads:—"The occupier of any shop in which are employed females, shall at all times provide and keep therein a sufficient and suitable seat or chair for the use of every such female, and shall permit her to use such seat or chair when not necessarily engaged in the work or duty for which she is employed in such shop." There is, however, no provincial system of inspection to carry out this Act.

(3.) The "Act respecting Mining Regulations," Ontario, 1890, enacts that "No boy under *fifteen* years of age shall work in a mine underground."

"No girl or woman shall be employed at mining work or for such a purpose in or about a mine."

"No boy under *seventeen* years of age shall work in any mine underground more than eight hours a day or more than forty-eight hours a week."

Such is the legislation in Ontario in regard to the employment of children and women.

#### Section II.—Effects of Legislation and Inspection.

##### 1. Limitations of Inspection.

The provisions of the "Factories Act" do not apply (a) to any factory employing not more than *five* persons; (b) where children, young girls or women are employed at home in a private dwelling, wherein the only persons employed are members of the family dwelling there. Originally the limit was placed at twenty; but as soon as the inspectors entered on their work it was found that the smaller places of business were more in need of inspection than the larger; and on their recommendation the Act as amended placed the limit at *five*.

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Thus there are numerous small places of business employing four and five women, particularly small dressmaking and millinery establishments, which are excluded from the benefits of the Act. But it cannot be doubted that some system of inspection is needed for all places where women and children are employed. There is no reason why some places should be inspected and others not. That only one or two women are employed in any capacity is no reason why they should be subject to whatever conditions their employers see fit to impose. It would be advisable to do away with the number-limit altogether.

## 2. Child Labour.

Section 6 prohibits the employment of boys under twelve and girls under fourteen in any factory coming under the Act; and in the case of boys under fourteen the employer is obliged to keep a certificate signed by the parent or guardian of the birth-place and age of such child, or else the written opinion of a registered physician that such child is not under age. But boys and girls under age are allowed to work during the summer months in such gathering in and other preparation of fruits and vegetables for canning or desiccating purposes as may be required to be done prior to the operation of cooking or other process of that nature. Such employment is, of course, only temporary, owing to the perishable nature of the material; and, as the employment is light, children are as well able to do it as older persons, but whether it is really as profitable to employ them is a matter for the employers to decide. In some cases, such as the operation of shelling peas, machinery has taken the place of manual labour, thus lessening the employment of children.

That some legislation was necessary to limit the employment of children in Ontario was seen long before the passing of the Act. In 1881 the Dominion Government appointed a Commission to make inquiry into the working of mills and factories in Canada and the labour employed therein. The Commission visited and reported upon 465 factories, in which over two thousand children under fourteen years of age were found, and nearly two hundred of these were under ten years of age. The Commissioners state that considerable difficulty was found in obtaining with accuracy the ages of the children; for there was no record required to be kept, and in many instances the children, having no education, were unable to tell their ages—this more particularly among the very young children of eight and nine years. It was found, too, that wherever children were employed they invariably worked as many hours as the adults, and if not compelled were at least requested to work overtime; so that the condition of the young workers in the latter part of the day, especially during the warm summer weather, was anything but desirable. In some cases they were obliged to be at work as early as 6.30 a.m., necessitating their being up much earlier for their morning meal and walk to work, and this in winter as well as in summer. This was unquestionably too heavy a strain on growing children, and was condemned by all except those who were directly benefited. As late as 1886-7 the Royal Labour Commission reported that child labour under legal age was still largely employed, the Factory Act not having got into working order. That the enforcement of this Act has been the means of largely decreasing the amount of child labour may be seen from the Inspectors' Reports. Wherever boys and girls under age have been found the employer has been notified; and when the practice has been continued they have been prosecuted. In the report for the Western District for 1888 there were found about two hundred and fifty boys between twelve and fourteen, while in the report for the ensuing year only one hundred and sixty-nine were recorded. One reason given for the decrease was that the canning factories were not as active in the latter year. In some cases the employers preferred not to employ the children because of the trouble attached to procuring certificates. The chief resistance indeed comes from the parents of the children who, either from necessity or greed, are so anxious to get employment for them that they will sometimes furnish false certificates.

Sometimes children under legal age were employed by persons who took contracts for work and who, although working in a factory, argued that because the number they em

ployed was less than constituted a factory under the law they were exempt from its provisions, although the total number of persons employed in such factory would cause it to be classed under the Act.

In some cases where children under age were found it was pleaded as an excuse that they were only a month or two under the required age. Parents too, complained that their children would not go to school, and were better at work than running about in the streets.

Of the boys between twelve and fourteen quite a number work in saw-mills where dangerous machinery is used. The Inspector for the Eastern District has suggested that the legal age for boys employed in saw-mills be raised to fourteen. In Quebec the legal age for boys in saw-mills is sixteen. Seeing that the whole number of boys between twelve and fourteen employed in factories is comparatively small, it would be no great revolution to raise the age for boys employed in any kind of factory to fourteen, and also prohibit their employment in any kind of dangerous work before sixteen. It would simplify the labours of the Inspectors considerably in the matter of requiring certificates, and also diminish the responsibility of the employers, who, in many cases, are importuned by the parents or even by the children themselves to give employment. A saving clause might be added to allow a boy to work where it could be shown that such work was necessary either for his own support or for the support of his family.

The factories found employing girls under age at the first visit of the Inspectors were principally cotton, woollen and knitting mills, which are run generally the full sixty hours a week, and where the work is purely mechanical as well as extremely monotonous. For a girl of fourteen or thereabouts to work continuously for ten hours a day and six days a week cannot but prove injurious to her health. Where factories are running for ten hours a day no girls under sixteen ought to be employed, or if they are, only for a short period. In Quebec the employment of boys under sixteen and girls under eighteen is prohibited in any factory named for that purpose by the Lieutenant-Governor in Council as unhealthy or dangerous. The list at present contains the names of twenty-eight kinds of manufactures which are considered dangerous on account of the dust, obnoxious odours, or danger from fire. Among these are tobacco factories, foundries and saw mills; and boys under fourteen and girls under fifteen are altogether prohibited from working in cigar factories.

Scarcity of labour cannot be pleaded as an excuse for the employment of children as long as able-bodied men are seeking employment; and, of course, the gradual restriction of child labour widens to some extent, if not in the same proportion, the field for adult labour.

While child labour is thus partially restricted in Ontario in factories, there is not the slightest restriction set upon their employment in shops and offices. Numerous children find employment as cash and parcel boys and girls in retail stores. This evil, however, does not exist now to the same extent as formerly owing to the introduction of machinery for carrying cash and even parcels to the desks and wrapping counters. Boys in Toronto find employment in selling newspapers on the street; but although girls did engage in such employment at one time they are now, very properly, prohibited from doing so.

It is to be hoped that the restrictions under the Factories Act in regard to child labour will be applied to their employment in mercantile and mechanical establishments as soon as possible. If child labour is to be effectually restricted the compulsory school law and the Factories Act must work together. If the school law compels all children between eight and fourteen to be in attendance at some school it is plain that they cannot be employed in any work during school hours. But to carry out the Education Act, far more abundant and efficient inspection must be provided than at present, and school accommodation, even if of a temporary character, must be promptly furnished in growing suburbs.

### 3. Hours of Labour.

Sub section 3 of section 6, of the Factory Act enacts that no child, young girl or women shall be employed in a factory for more than *ten* hours a day or more than *sixty* hours in any one week ; unless a different apportionment of the hours of labour per day has been made for the sole purpose of giving a shorter day's work on Saturday. Sub-section 4 requires that every employer shall allow each child, young girl and women not less than one hour at noon of each day for meals.

In addition to these regular hours for work, exemptions may be granted by the Inspectors, where the exigencies of certain trades demand it, for working overtime; but in such cases no child, young girl or women shall work longer than twelve and a half hours a day or seventy two and a half in any one week ; and such exemption shall not comprise more than six weeks in any one year, nor shall the time fixed for meals be diminished. During the period of such exemption, every child, young girl or woman, employed in any factory to an hour later than seven in the evening shall be allowed not less than forty-five minutes for an evening meal between five and eight o'clock in the evening. While working overtime, women are not to be employed before six in the morning, nor later than nine in the evening, except in canning factories where they may work later than nine in the evening for not more than twenty days in a year.

In those places coming under the Factories Act where women are employed, comparatively few work for the full sixty hours a week. In a list comprising eighty factories in Toronto, only ten worked for sixty hours a week ; fourteen worked less than sixty but over fifty-five ; thirty worked from fifty to fifty-five hours ; and the remainder from forty-four to fifty. One cause of the reduction of hours in Toronto is the general adoption of the Saturday half-holiday. Outside Toronto it is not so general, and the hours of labour per week reach a higher average. It is to be hoped that fifty-five hours will be made the limit instead of sixty ; and so cause the hours of labour to be nine hours a day, or else five and a half days a week.

The clause in the Act which allows a different apportionment of the hours per day in case of shorter hours on Saturday is an unfortunate one, because it would permit an average of eleven hours a day for five days in the week,—far too long a period for women to work.

Those factories which work the full sixty-hours are principally cotton, woollen and knitting mills, where expensive machinery is employed.

Before the Factories Act came into force many factories worked longer than ten hours a day ; so that the results of inspection have been thus far beneficial.

Another loop-hole in the law is the clause concerning the noon meal hour. It reads, "the employer shall allow not less than one hour at noon," which has been interpreted to mean that the employes may take less if they choose, and in some cases this has been done, either in order to stop work earlier in the evening or to lessen the hours of work on Saturday. It need hardly be said that shortening the meal hour is poor economy in the way of preserving one's health. In this matter the girls themselves are not the best judges ; for the majority of them would even prefer to take only a half hour at noon if by so doing they could stop work earlier in the evening. In some cases where girls made such a request the employers wisely advised against it ; and in one case a compromise of three-quarters of an hour was effected. It would be better if the law were more absolute in the matter, especially where the full ten hours a day is insisted on.

Still another matter in which the law is indefinite is that of night labour for women and children. The law *does* state that where, under the exemption women work longer than ten hours a day they are not to be employed before six in the morning nor later than nine in the evening, but it does not prohibit night labour *per se*. As a matter of fact girls in Toronto have been employed for a few months from eleven o'clock in the evening till five or six in the morning in setting up type at the Central Press Agency

for the cable despatches to country newspapers. The Deputy Attorney-General has appealed to for the interpretation of the law, but it was decided that nothing in the Act prevented the night employment of women. Fortunately for the women themselves, in the case referred to they found the work too arduous, and have ceased working (since September 18th, 1891).

The Factory Law in Switzerland is more definite in this matter and states that "under no circumstances shall women work on Sunday or at night work." The law of Massachusetts is "no corporation or manufacturing establishment in this commonwealth shall employ any minor or women between the hours of ten o'clock at night and six in the morning." The Quebec Factories Act as amended states "that the day of ten hours work shall not commence before six in morning nor end after nine in the evening." According to the new English Act, the employment of women must now be brought within a specified period of twelve hours, taken between 6 a.m. and 10 p.m., with an hour and a half off for meals, except on Saturday, when the period is eight hours with half a hour off. It is to be hoped that the law in Ontario will be so amended that night labour for women will be prohibited.

Complaint has frequently been made to the Inspectors that women in millinery and dressmaking establishments are employed over ten hours a day; but of course as long as the legal limit of sixty hours per week is not exceeded by any one employé, the Inspectors cannot interfere. It seems usual during the busy season to ask part of the staff to remain after six o'clock, the usual hour for closing, one part taking turn with another. There is generally no allowance made for an evening meal in such cases, the girls preferring to work till they finish rather than go home and come back again; but to work from one till eight or nine in the evening without food is certainly not conducive to health. Legislation on the subject seems to be called for. According to the English Factory Act no women can be employed for more than four and a half hours without an interval of half an hour at least for a meal. The overtime occurs only during the busy season or on Saturdays. Employers argue that it is not always possible to foresee what work is coming in, and that in order to oblige their customers they have to promise the work at a certain time. Some establishments make it a rule never to work overtime; and when urgent work comes in, other work is put aside for a time. It would be well if all would make this the rule. A little more forethought too, on the part of customers would lessen the evil. Ladies could often wait a day or two for a bonnet or gown; or, if not, could give their order earlier. Conversation with those in the business reveals the fact that it is not orders for dresses for weddings or funerals which cause overtime—but those for balls and parties, this of course in establishments doing a trade of that kind. The general desire again on the part of many to have a new gown or bonnet for Sunday makes Saturday the busiest day for dressmakers and milliners. In England no woman can be employed in such establishments after 4 p.m. on Saturdays. It is not customary to pay for such overtime in Toronto. The matter seems to be looked on as only occasional, but there is a danger of too much of it being done if some restriction is not placed on the length of time in any one day during which a woman may be employed.

All that has been said hitherto in regard to the hours of labor only applies to manufacturing establishments where girls and women are employed.

The Factories Act in Ontario does not include mercantile or mechanical employments in its provisions. The Shops' Regulation Act however prohibits the employment of boys under fourteen and girls under sixteen for a longer period than twelve hours a day including meal hours, or than fourteen hours a day on Saturday also including meal hours. *Such an enactment makes no regulations whatever for girls over sixteen as far as the hours of work are concerned, and as the majority of girls employed in shops are over that age the Act is not very far-reaching.* As has been already stated there is no system of inspection under this Act. In some towns the shopdealers have combined under the early closing by-law and close their shops at seven in the evening; but this is not as general as could be wished.

#### 4. Hours of Labour in Toronto Stores.

It will, perhaps, be well to describe the conditions under which girls are actually employed in shops in Toronto.



In Toronto the retail stores employing girls and women are the dry-goods, millinery fancy goods and confectionary stores; and many are also employed in restaurants and coffee houses. Occasionally women may be found in small numbers in other stores, but they are then generally members of the family engaged in the business.

Taking the dry-goods business as the one in which the majority of girls are employed in Toronto, a distinction must be drawn between the large and small stores in the hours of employment and in the kind of work done. To begin with the large stores; girls rarely start work before eight in the morning, and in some cases as late as nine, especially in the winter. One hour is allowed for dinner and it is customary to divide the girls into two sections, one half dining from twelve to one, and the other from one to two. The large stores close at six o'clock in the evening; and in the summer months it is beginning to be the custom to close early on Saturday afternoons, as in the factories. On the whole, nine hours a day is the maximum, with a total of fifty-four hours a week.

The position of saleswomen in the small dry-goods stores is quite different. The hours for beginning work are about the same; some however open before eight in the morning. An hour is generally allowed for dinner, and the girls take turns in dining as in the large stores. But the small stores in Toronto do not close till nine and ten in the evening; and on Saturday they remain open till eleven and even twelve. Sometimes where two or more girls are employed, each girl is required to remain only a certain number of evenings in the week, but all remain on Saturday. The number of evenings which each girl is required to work varies considerably with the number of saleswomen; sometimes it is as many as five and sometimes only two in the week. In some cases, where the girls find the evening mealtime too short to permit them to go home, they bring a "lunch" with them and eat it at the store—a method hardly conducive to health. It is the hours on Saturday however that are particularly tiring, coming as they do at the end of the week's work; and an improvement in this matter is imperative. Employers urge that the class of customers who patronize the small stores do not or are not able to shop until the evenings, especially on Saturday. It is true that many who depend on the weekly wages for the Saturday purchases are obliged to wait till evening to shop if they are not paid till Saturday; and hence it would be better if the use of Friday as a pay day were more general than it is. But after all has been said, it is largely a matter of custom, and if people knew that they were obliged to shop earlier they could easily do so. For the present it would be beneficial if some arrangement could be arrived at, so that those saleswomen who remain late on Saturday evening need not begin work early in the day; and this arrangement might also apply to other evenings as well, as long as shops are allowed to remain open in the evening. Another objection to the custom of long hours is that the girls have often to find their way home alone at late hours, along lonely streets. If the shops were brought under the Factory Act or if the Shops' Regulation Act were amended so as to harmonize with it, the condition of the saleswomen would be vastly improved.

In the confectionery and fruit shops the hours are equally long; but the work is not so continuous. During the early hours of the day business is not very brisk, and the girls have opportunities for resting; but still the same objections to late hours apply. Numbers of girls are employed as waitresses at restaurants, lunch parlours and coffee houses. In these the hours are irregular owing to the nature of the business. In those which supply meals in the evening, the girls are generally divided into two sections. One half begin work at eight in the morning and leave off at six or seven in the evening, the other half begin at half-past nine or ten in the morning and leave off at nine or ten in the evening, but all remain on Saturday evening. Where noon meals are given the girls have a lunch before noon and dine at three in the afternoon. Some day restaurants close at six and then the girls do not remain in the evening at all. In some of the coffee houses a relief corps is employed during the busiest part of the day, from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., when the regular staff is not sufficient for the work. On the whole the hours are not excessive, for the work is not continuous and the labour is for the most part unskilled. Meals are always given to the girls at their places of business at whatever hours are most convenient, for, owing to the nature of the employment, the ordinary meal hours are not possible.

About seventy girls find employment at the central and branch offices of the Bell Telephone Company. The hours of employment vary considerably. The regular staff is divided into four sections, who begin work at 7 a.m., 8 a.m., 8.30 a.m. and 11.30 a.m. respectively, and leave off work at 5 p.m., 6 p.m., 6.30 p.m. and 2.30 p.m. respectively. The fourth section commences again at 5 p.m. and 6 p.m. and leaves off at 9 p.m. and 10 p.m., an average of nine hours a day for the first three sections and seven hours for the fourth or relief section, whose hours, however, are not so convenient. The three regular sections have one hour for dinner, unless some operator is away, and the others have to make up her time and then one-half or all the dinner hour is taken away from some of the staff. Extra pay is given whenever this is done; but the girls, in most cases, would prefer to have the whole hour for their meal and do without the money. The girls also receive extra pay for working over-time at night. On Sunday one-fourth of the staff employed from 8.30 a.m. to 4 p.m., and a relief corps from 4 p.m. to 10 p.m., no time being allowed for meals. Thus each girl works at least one Sunday in the month and sometimes two. Those working on Sunday receive extra pay. On public holidays two-thirds of the staff are employed, and each girl is employed two holidays in every three, and these are treated as regular working days. Thus it will be seen that the hours are extremely complicated and sufficiently arduous; indeed, there can be little doubt that they are capable of some simplification and reduction. The work is constant and monotonous, and it involves a severe strain on the nerves, so that extra hours cannot but prove irritating. It is to be regretted that there is a seeming necessity for Sunday employment.

Girls are employed as assistants at the central and branch Public Libraries. They are divided into two sections. One-half come at 8.30 a.m. and remain till 6 p.m., having two hours for dinner from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. The other half come at 12.30 p.m. and remain till the library closes, which is 8 p.m. in summer and 9.30 p.m. in winter, having from 5 p.m. to 6 p.m. for tea. The work is somewhat fluctuating; during some parts of the day the work is much harder than at others. The busiest times are between twelve and one and between six and seven, when the present small staff do not seem sufficient to give out the books with any rapidity, so that a regular relief corps at these hours might be advantageously employed, especially as the work seems likely to increase.

The hours for girls employed in office work vary considerably according to the nature of the employment, but they are not for the most part excessive, generally ending at 5 and 6 p.m. The girls in the telegraph offices work nine hours a day, the men doing the night work. A number of girls are employed at the branch offices, especially in the country, where the hours are from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. with one hour for dinner. These hours on a heavy line would prove long; but as a rule girls are only given the lighter lines to operate.

An increasing number of women are entering hospitals to train for professional nurses—this being a sphere for which women seem peculiarly fitted where they are sufficiently strong and robust. The course in Toronto is two years in order to qualify for a diploma. Some take the course preparatory to becoming medical missionaries. In Toronto General Hospital the nurses in training compose the whole staff, so that no nurse remains longer than two years. The nurses are divided into two sections for work. The day nurses go on duty at 7 a.m. and remain on till 7 p.m. The night nurses go on duty at 7 p.m. and remain on till 7 a.m. One half hour is given for dinner and one hour in the afternoon for recreation, so that the nurse is at work for ten hours and a half. Each nurse has four months of night work during the first year, and two months during the second year of training. In some American hospitals it is the custom to divide the nurses into three sections, so that each nurse is only on duty for eight hours, and this plan seems better adapted to lighten the labours of the nurses which are sufficiently difficult and arduous at any time. Or at least it would be advisable to shorten the night hours in some way. It would be better, too, if some of the staff were retained permanently; so that they should not all be, comparatively speaking, novices in the work.



### 5. Sanitary Conditions.

Section 11 of the Factory Act makes provision for the sanitation of the factories under the Act. Overcrowding is prohibited; ventilation is insisted on, especially in those factories where the process of manufacture gives rise to dust, gaseous vapours or other impurities; and separate closets with separate approaches are to be provided for the use of men and women employed.

This being one of the most important provisions of the Act, it has received particular attention from the inspectors, and improvements are being rapidly effected, even at considerable expense to the employers in some instances. Fire escapes have been erected in several factories since the advent of inspection. It is particularly in the older buildings that improvements are necessary; the newly erected factories and workshops are generally well provided for in sanitary matters, but supervision is necessary to keep them so.

The matter of ventilation is one that requires constant and frequent inspection, for conditions that might be sufferable in favourable weather might not be so at other times. The extremes of heat and cold in Canada cause continual fluctuation in the temperature of workrooms, and those that might appear comfortable at one season of the year would be quite the opposite at another. Under the Factory Acts of some countries thermometers are required to be placed in the workrooms, and the temperature must be regulated accordingly.

In the matter of cleanliness, although much may be done by the employers, those employed are often to blame for not maintaining the good conditions. On the whole there is every reason to hope for great improvements under this section of the Act, but like all the other provisions it only applies to manufacturing establishments. In the Report of the Bureau of Industries for 1889, the collectors for Toronto state that "Both men and women in stores and small workshops suffer more from lack of accommodation and proper ventilation than the workers in larger establishments. One or more of the large stores in Toronto employ more hands than any save the largest factories. They certainly employ more children under fourteen and more girls from fourteen to twenty." In view of the above facts the collectors submit as a subject for enquiry "the propriety of extending the operations of the Factory Act so as to bring all or some of these establishments under its beneficent influences."

The "Shops' Regulation Act" provides that every one employing women in stores shall provide suitable seats and permit their use when the women are not especially engaged in work; but, as there is no system of inspection under the Act, this provision is, to a large extent, a dead letter. In Toronto occasionally some attempt is made at enforcement, but it is neither general nor continuous. One great objection employers seem to have to allowing girls in stores to sit down when they are not actively engaged is, that it gives an appearance of dullness of trade; and many will give a girl work to do to keep her employed when she is not serving.

Some system of inspection for the whole province is necessary in this matter. This could be accomplished by including mercantile establishments under the Factories Act. Under the laws of Massachusetts and Ohio seats are to be provided for women in manufacturing and mechanical establishments as well as mercantile ones; and it would be well if similar legislation could be enforced in Ontario, for standing in one position for any length of time is just as fatiguing as moving about, if not more so. In the States before mentioned no girl under sixteen is allowed to work at any employment whatever which compels her to remain standing.

### 6. Need for Further Inspection.

With the present staff of three officials much has been done for the improvement of the condition of those employed in factories. But factories are not the only places in need of inspection; and any extension of the Act would no doubt increase the labours of the inspectors to such an extent that the present staff would have to be augmented. Even without any extension of the Act it does not

seem that the staff is sufficient for persistent and frequent inspection. The field covered by each inspector is very extensive. One inspector alone includes in his district all the west side of Toronto and all western Ontario, including eighteen counties with numerous towns and cities; while for inspecting its saloons Toronto alone has three inspectors, and the Education Department appoints a school inspector for every county or electoral division of a county in the province.

Whether male inspectors are sufficient for carrying out all the provisions of the Act effectively is a question which has raised considerable discussion. There is not the slightest doubt that in matters where women and children are concerned, a woman will gain the confidence of her sex far sooner than a man, even in seeking general information. In glancing over the annual reports of the Bureau of Industries for Ontario one meets many sentences like the following:—"Collectors complain of the increasing desire exhibited by wage-earners, particularly by women, to abstain from furnishing matter for statistics." And again, "Women, as you are aware, are averse to giving such information, and in some cases are not approachable." As a contrast to this, it may be mentioned that in the pursuit of this inquiry in no single case was information refused by any of the many women and girls who were spoken to; indeed in most cases it was given willingly and even gladly.

Women factory inspectors have recently been appointed in several States in the Union, and so far with unqualified success. Pennsylvania was the pioneer State in this respect. Under its Factory Act one-half of the inspectors appointed are to be women. New York possesses eight female deputy inspectors. Massachusetts has this year appointed two women; and Chicago has three for that city alone. Several other States are contemplating following these examples; and the States which now have women inspectors are asking for more.

Chief Wade, of Massachusetts, in his Address to the Convention of Factory Inspectors at New York in 1890, declares that "the women appointed possess peculiar qualifications for certain duties of factory inspection in which the comfort and health of their own sex are concerned. Many of the women appointed have long been identified with the study of industrial questions, and they may be regarded as well qualified by experience and sympathy for the faithful discharge of their duties." And Mrs. Alex. Bremer, one of the deputies for New York at the same convention, justly remarked that "as long as society permits the labour of women and children in factories and workshops, either to assist their husbands and parents to eke out an existence or to earn their own livelihood, as long as this deplorable state of things lasts, women as factory inspectors are a necessity."

## CHAPTER II.—WAGES.

### *Section I.—Wages in Employments exclusively Female.*

It may not be possible to draw an absolute line between what is skilled and what is unskilled labour, since all labour requires if not training at least aptitude; still it is evident that some employments are more easily entered than others because it is not necessary to have special training for them.

As might be expected the employments requiring comparatively unskilled labour cannot command such high wages in the long run as those demanding skilled labour, other things being equal.

The wages of skilled labour are subject to greater variation owing to the various degrees of proficiency from the apprentice to the finished workwoman; while the wages of unskilled labour are more uniform and do not rise much above what they were at starting, because such labour can easily be supplied when needed.

Even in different branches of the same employment some parts will require more special training than others. The very fact of there being a number of employments requiring unskilled labour has led, no doubt, to the increased employment of young girls and women. We shall first take up those employments demanding only unskilled labour and then consider those requiring more or less training.

The position of domestic servants, however, seems to fall under both heads and it will be considered first.

### 1. Domestic Servants.

In Canada the class of domestic servant most universally in demand is the *general*. Owing to the fact that there are but few wealthy people, in the vast majority of cases where servants are kept only one is employed; and the supply of specially trained servants is as limited as the demand for them. Girls who are able to live at home and earn enough to partially support themselves have no inducement to go into domestic service; and in cities the supply of domestics is kept up only by draining the surrounding country of girls who come to the cities for the higher wages and other advantages. In some cases too they are imported from Great Britain and Ireland. Of late years so many employments have opened up for women that the supply of domestic servants is rather short of the demand; and, as a consequence, their wages have risen considerably, so that many mistresses of households are obliged to do without or take incompetent servants. An inexperienced girl who goes "to assist in light housework," as the advertisements put it, will earn from \$6 to \$7 a month in a city. A good general servant can command from \$8 to \$14 a month, according to her work—"with or without washing." In some cases it really amounts to a cook's position, only it seems to be the custom to call it that of a "general" to avoid such disputes as might arise over questions of work.

Cooks are rewarded with from \$12 to \$20 a month, according to the amount and kind of work to be done. Cooks for hotels and restaurants are paid higher than those in private families; because as a rule the work is heavier and many girls object to the position. Housemaids are paid from \$8 to \$12 per month; and parlour-maids from \$10 to \$14. In many cases one girl does the work of both, as house and parlourmaid, where it is not convenient to keep the two. Nurses get from \$8 to \$12. Under nurses \$5. Kitchen maids from \$8 to \$12. Laundresses get as high as \$16 a month. Seamstresses \$14. Another class of servant is called "lady's help"—whose duties seem to be rather indefinite. The women who seek such positions are those who from adverse circumstances are in need of a home and the remuneration is not the first consideration. The demand is perhaps less than the supply.

The general reluctance of girls to go into service in Canada has been much discussed. Many point out that they are really better off than girls working in factories or shops so far as wages and comfort are concerned. On the other hand the factory or shop girl has certain hours; and when her work is over her time is her own. Then too, many prefer to work where there are a number of other girls employed; and as has been already stated, as long as a girl can live at home and earn a little money at some light employment there is no need for her to go into service. Moreover, there can be no doubt that the social barrier which exists between mistress and maid deters many from service in a new country where class distinctions are not as fixed and definite as in older countries.

The work of a girl in a factory or shop is definite and soon learned, while the work of a domestic, especially of a "general," is more indefinite and varied. This indefiniteness with regard to what a girl is expected to do, and what she is not expected to do, is one of the causes of disputes which often end in a notice to leave or a dismissal. The fact that some mistresses require their servants to do too much leads servants very often to try to do as little as possible. On the other hand mistresses who treat their servants kindly are sometimes taken advantage of. Girls are expected, in Toronto, to give at least two weeks notice to leave. Each girl expects one evening a week for herself at least, and often more are given. Part of

Sunday also is given. Some mistresses only ask that a girl should get through her work, and impose no restrictions. It is next to impossible to generalize on the various privileges and requirements of general servants. Each household seems to be a law to itself.

The majority of servants do not stop long in one place. Of course there are many exceptions, but the fact that a girl knows that she can get a place at any time makes her more independent. In cities many families who go away for the summer dismiss the servants; and in the autumn there is a general readjusting of service everywhere. Many girls work in summer hotels for the season and return when it is over.

At present there does not seem to be any expectation of the supply of domestics being increased. Wages have risen, so that many families who formerly were able to keep a servant now do without, and those who kept two or three can only keep one or two. In Canada the majority of housekeepers are able to do their own work in an emergency; so that the interval between the leaving of one servant and the advent of another does not mean a complete interregnum in the work of the household. Owing to the invention of many modern conveniences it is possible to reduce the work to a minimum; and by getting partial assistance for the very heavy work many are able to do without house servants altogether.

### 2. *Apprentices.*

Apprentices in dressmaking, tailoring and millinery are not required to pay any premium, but are not, as a rule, paid for the first six months. At the end of that time they receive some small remuneration as improvers and assistants. Much depends on the special talent and adaptability of the worker. As improvers and assistants they may receive \$1 or \$2 a week. In stores, girls sometimes serve as saleswomen for a short time for nothing; but more often they are paid from the start, especially if it is known to the employer that they are dependent on themselves. Sometimes they start as check and parcel hands at \$1.50 and \$2.50 a week. In the large majority of employments there seems to be no definite regulations in regard to fixed increase of wages. Many employers, of course, try to keep them as low as possible, and this they can do when they know that there are always many who are willing to work for what they can get.

### 3. *Miscellaneous Employments.*

In canning factories young girls are employed in preparing the fruit and vegetables for canning in the summer months for \$1 and \$2 a week.

In cigar and tobacco factories girls do the stripping, i.e., taking out the midrib of the leaf, receiving on an average about \$2.50 a week.

In soap factories girls are employed in wrapping up toilet soap and packing it in boxes for \$2 and \$3 a week.

In seed factories girls empty and fill the seed packets. Those emptying receive  $\frac{1}{2}$  cent per hundred and those filling get  $1\frac{1}{2}$  cents per hundred. At this they make from \$2 to \$3 a week, and when particularly expert, even more.

In cotton, woollen and knitting mills there are various occupations, which are suited for girls, only requiring dexterity and nimbleness, such as tending the hobbins, for which they earn an average of \$2 a week.

In biscuit factories girls sort and pack the biscuits in boxes and label them, starting at \$2.50 a week. Those who are particularly skilful pack special grades, receiving as high as \$5 a week.

Girls employed in colouring bamboo work with gas jets and pokers receive \$2.50 a week.

In window shade factories girls tack on rollers, assist in decorating and sew on fringes and ornaments, starting on \$2 and \$3 a week.

Women employed in sorting rags for shoddy mills are paid by the bale. The work is not enticing, and young girls do not take it up. The only experience necessary is to

be able to tell the difference between woollen, cotton and silk goods and those which are mixtures. Women get from \$2 to \$5 at it.

As waitresses in restaurants and coffee houses girls receive \$2 and \$3, and are given their meals besides, except on Sunday. Those employed from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. receive \$1.50 and their dinner. No special training is necessary, but a girl is required to be neat, quick and able to write a good hand to take down orders.

In bookbinderies girls do the folding and stitching. The wages run from \$1.50 for beginners to \$5. In one bindery the wages for one week were as follows:—One girl received \$5, four girls received \$4, sixteen received \$3, and a few received less.

In a number of employments women are paid by the piece, and then of course the wages vary considerably. In some cases quite high wages are paid, but they must be regarded as exceptional. Wages in large towns and cities seem to average more than those in small towns, where the cost of living is not so high and rents are lower.

In knitting factories where women tend the machines, much depends on the kind of garment that is made, but \$5 a week seems the limit, a forewoman getting about \$6. In woollen mills the wages also vary, the weavers getting the best pay, but at most \$5, the average being \$3.50. In cotton mills the wages seem to be slightly higher on the average, weavers and web-drawers getting over \$5 and \$6.

In boot and shoe factories, on piece work, the women do the stitching, getting as much as \$7. The men do the heaviest stitching and the soleing. Girls employed in the finishing room in putting in laces and buttons are paid about \$3 a week.

In corset factories the women do the stitching and men do the cutting. The less experienced do the plain stitching and the best hands do the closing in, while others sew on trimmings: the wages vary from \$1.50 up to \$8 and \$9, but \$5 seems a good average.

In laundries, wash-house women get from \$3 to \$5. Starchers get from \$4.75 to \$5.50, and ironers get from \$4 to \$8 a week.

In tobacco factories women do the packing and men do the weighing and pressing. The women receive as high as \$1 a day if good workers.

In cigar factories "bunch breakers" and "bookers" get from \$4 to \$5. Cigarmakers and rollers obtain higher wages. When very expert and experienced they have been known to make as high as \$13 a week.

In glove factories men do the cutting out and girls do the stitching and embroidering, earning from \$2 to \$6, averaging between \$4 and \$5.

Capmakers employed in stitching soft caps together make on piece work from \$4 to \$8.

In candy works those packing and finishing start on \$2.50 a week. Those working at chocolate candies and lozenges, paid by piece work get \$5 and \$6 a week.

Saleswomen in dry-goods stores get about \$3 and \$4 on the average. The heads of departments get from \$6 to \$15; but this only in the large stores. In small stores girls have no special department, but sell in all. In large stores millinery and mantel departments form a part of the establishment and are always in charge of women.

Dressmakers as waist and skirt hands rarely get over \$5 a week; cutters and fitters, generally being forewomen, get from \$6 to \$20, the average perhaps being about \$10.

Tailoresses doing wholesale work in shops are not often paid by the piece, and earn between \$3 and \$4 a week. Those working at home average about the same, but of course all depends on steady work. Those who do custom tailoring are paid better especially in busy seasons. Pant and vestmakers can make from \$5 to \$7 and coatmakers as high as \$11 and \$13 a week.

Bagmakers on piece work make from \$6 to \$9 during the busy season from October to March—these for special orders only; for the ordinary sizes of paper bags are made wholly by machinery.

In jewellery manufactories girls employed at burnishing start at \$1.50 and earn as much as \$4 and \$5. Engravers and chainmakers get better wages on the average, but \$5 seems the limit.

In tin and stamping works girls do the japanning and soldering. Girls are started on \$2 and \$2.50 a week; and when capable they are put on piece work. At soldering they can earn \$4 and \$5. Special hands earn as much as \$1.50 a day.

In dyeing and cleaning works, feather curlers get \$5 if expert. Ironers range from \$3 for plain ironers to \$7.50 and \$8 for fancy ironers.

In paperbox factories wages run from \$3 to \$6.

Machine operators on women's and children's underwear are generally on piece work. The cutters get \$6 and \$5.50, and the machine workers get from \$2.50 to \$6.

Girls employed as book-keepers, assistant cashiers and in other office work get from \$3 to \$10; a good average being \$6.

As type-setters girls begin at \$2 and get about \$4 when experienced; but there are not many women employed as compositors in Toronto.

Girls employed as telephone clerks in Toronto get nothing for the first few weeks till they are able to manage a switch alone. Then they get \$15 a month; after the first three months they get \$20 a month. The head operators get \$25 and \$30 a month. For each Sunday's work 75c. is paid, and 25c. for a dinner hour if a girl is then employed; 10c. an hour being paid for work done after hours in the evening.

The free library assistants receive \$300 for the first year and \$400 for the second. The head assistant gets \$450 a year.

Professional nurses with hospital training can command \$14 a week for ordinary cases and \$16 for infectious cases. Non-professional nurses ask from \$5 to \$10 a week.

Telegraphers generally start in large offices in Toronto as check girls getting \$12 and \$15 a month. As operators they get from \$25 to \$40 a month. In some offices, especially expert operators get \$45 and \$55 a month.

Typewriters and stenographers start at \$3 and \$4 when they have not much experience, and average from \$6 to \$8 as expert workers.

Public school teachers in towns and cities receive higher pay than those in villages and country districts. In Toronto the minimum salary for a public school teacher is \$324 a year; which is raised annually, irrespective of the grades taught, by \$24 a year till a maximum of \$636 is reached. Head mistresses receive as much as \$1,000; and in some cases increases are made on account of length of service.

The average salary for a woman teacher for the whole province is \$296 a year.

In the High Schools and Collegiate Institutes the average salary of a woman assistant in general work is \$575; and for those who act as specialists in any department, a position for which a university degree is necessary, the average salary is \$875; the highest being \$1,500 for a woman.

Women in the civil service, employed as clerks, average \$536 a year. The lowest is \$400, the highest \$800. Women in Ontario have entered at least one of the learned professions, namely, medicine; the number of lady doctors is rapidly increasing. Some go away as medical missionaries, others remain as local practitioners.

#### *Section II.—Effect on Wages of Competition with men.*

"It is difficult," as was recently pointed out at the meeting of the British Association, "to find cases in which men and women are employed at precisely similar work. In the great majority of cases in which the hiring takes place by time the inferior physical strength of women of necessity almost always tells against them."

In a number of employments, however, where the work is not too difficult for women they are gradually displacing men.

### 1. *Cigarmaking.*

In the cigar manufacture in Ontario, in which formerly men were largely employed, the work is now almost entirely done by women and children.

In one factory of one hundred and fifty employes only thirteen were men. The object of this is of course to cheapen the cost of production. The preliminary parts of stripping the leaf and breaking the bunch can be done by children with little practice; and in the past it was the custom to employ them until they learned how to do it and wanted higher wages, and then a fresh supply was obtained. Women who make the cigars can generally earn good wages, but they do not get on an average as high wages as men even where they are paid the same rate for piece work.

In Toronto there are very few women employed in cigar-making. The reason being that all the employes belong to a union which insists on all workers being paid alike, and the employers prefer to employ men, because they are likely to remain longer in the business. One woman who was paid the same wages as men on piece work stated that she did not make as much on an average as the men, because she did not care to risk the loss of her health by too close application to work.

In the tobacco trade women and children are also largely employed. The girls do the stripping and the women make the plugs, the men now only doing the weighing and pressing. Some attempt has been made to supersede the work even of women in cigar-making by the use of machines for that purpose; but as yet machine-made cigars are not in universal favour.

There is no doubt that if women were paid the same rates as the men they would not be so largely employed.

### 2. *Tailoring.*

In tailoring women and girls work largely for the wholesale trade in ready-made clothing; and the majority of the pant and vest makers doing custom work are women also. Coat-making for custom trade is done by both men and women, but women cannot command such high wages as men for the same work. For making a coat a woman will ask only two-thirds of what a man will: the probability being that if she asked the same she would not get the order. The question as to whether their work is as good is one on which a difference of opinion seems to exist. In some cases the men take the orders for custom work and employ girls to do the sewing on week work, which has the advantage of securing steady employment for them. Cutting the garments is seldom done by women, except in a small way for custom work in boy's clothing.

Comparisons are often drawn between the wages women receive for wholesale work and those they receive for custom work. A woman may receive only twenty-five cents for making a vest for the wholesale trade in ready-made clothing, while she will receive \$1 and more for an ordered vest. But it must be remembered that the garments are made quite differently and four vests of the first kind might be made during the time occupied in making one of the second kind. Those who are paid by week work do not of course receive as good wages as those on piece work.

### 3. *Saleswomen.*

Where both men and women are employed in selling goods in dry-goods stores, the women have charge of the lighter departments, such as gloves, hosiery, laces, buttons, fancy goods, ribbons, etc., while the men take the heavier departments of dress goods, carpets and other house furnishings, so that it is not possible to compare the wages in such cases. The women of course invariably receive less, except perhaps when they are heads of departments and are entrusted with the buying in their special lines. In small stores girls are not given any particular department on account of the limited stock carried, but sell in all, even dress goods, so that in some cases the work proves too heavy. Some employers who do not carry a large stock of light articles prefer men altogether. Here as elsewhere in the employment of girls and women it is a question of cheaper



labour; but in the large stores especially it seems that there is room for the employment of both men and women, the particular sphere of each being different. As in all other employments entered by women, the probability of marriage is a drawback to the permanency of their employment.

#### 4. *Stenography, Typewriting, Book-keeping and other Office Work.*

It is in office work more particularly that women of late years have displaced men; and it is probably in part the result of this is that the standard of wages for men in this kind of work has been perceptibly lowered. Another reason, however, for the low wages is that the supply is becoming greater than the demand. Although it is true that really efficient and competent workers can get positions, the market is overstocked with inexperienced clerks, owing to the system adopted in some business colleges and schools of accepting as pupils any who offer themselves for instruction, whether they have sufficient education or not. This is particularly true of typewriting and amateur stenography. The larger business colleges, it is true, state in their circulars that they prefer those with a good common education, but as yet there is no standard absolutely required for those who wish to pursue a commercial education. In Ontario there is a commercial course in the high schools for which certificates are granted, but the instruction does not include all branches of a business education. If a check is to be placed on this overcrowding, the business colleges will have to insist on some standard of excellence in the branches of an ordinary English education before accepting a pupil, and positions should only be given to those who are known to be competent. Women seem as fitted for this work as men, and have proved as competent where the work was not too severe.

#### 5. *Telegraphy.*

In telegraphy it is generally believed that women do not receive as good pay as the men. In Ontario men do all the night work; and where men and women are employed in the same office the men work the heavier lines. In this employment, as in others, one result of the competition of women is the lowering of salaries. In a few cases, it is true, women do as good work and receive as good pay as some men. In some cases girls, after learning the business in Canada, have found more lucrative positions in the States, where the salaries are as a rule much higher than here. That these higher salaries are to a large extent counterbalanced by the higher cost of living is usually not realized before migrating.

#### 6. *Teaching in Public Schools.*

That the number of men in the teaching profession in Ontario is decreasing, and the number of women increasing is shown from the following figures:—In 1877 the number of men teaching in the public schools in Ontario was 3,020, and the number of women 3,448. In 1889 the number of men was 2,774, and of women 5,193. Although the whole number of teachers had increased by 1,499 in twelve years, the number of men had decreased 226, and the number of women had increased 1,345. In 1889 the average salary for a male public school teacher was \$121, the highest being \$1,590, and the average salary for a woman was \$296. This difference is partially explained by the fact that men hold the positions of head masters especially in the graded schools of the towns and cities, and as a consequence receive larger salaries. Still, in the small ungraded schools, where women have frequently charge of a whole school, their salaries are undoubtedly smaller than those of men in similar positions. The large increase of women teachers at low salaries has led to the abandonment of the profession by men in most cases, except as a stepping stone to some other work.

The objection generally urged that women do not take up work with the intention of remaining at it for any length of time applies equally to men as far as public school teaching is concerned, especially in the smaller schools. Women remain in this profession fully as long as, if not longer than, men do, and in some cases teach equally well if not better;



so that there seems to be no reason why they should not be paid as well. Except in cases where the duties of a head master entail more labour there is no difference in the kind of work.

In the High Schools and Collegiate Institutes until within the last few years women only occupied the lower positions, at, of course, lower salaries; but since the advent of higher education for women they have been able to take their places beside the men in teaching the same work, and the tendency at present is to pay them as well. So far only one woman has held the position of head master of a high school. In Toronto some of the smaller public schools have women as head mistresses, and recently an attempt was made to increase their number. It is to be hoped that the present tendency towards paying women teachers the same as the men will grow, so that it will be a question of getting the best teacher in each case and not the cheapest.

### CHAPTER III.—EMPLOYMENT OF MARRIED WOMEN

The employment of married women in factories and stores in Ontario is not general. In a large number of factories and stores there are no married women at all; at most only one or two widows. Married women in Canada do not seem to go out to work as long as their husbands are at all able to support them. In canning factories, during the summer months, numbers of married women may be found; many work in laundries; and in a mill stock factory (preparing rags for shoddy mills) visited by the writer most of the women were married. Market gardening is a means of subsistence to some. Women whose husbands are dead or are not able to support them, will not go out as long as they have children at home to care for, but prefer, if they can, to engage in some work which will keep them at home. Women in poor circumstances go out washing and ironing to private houses or else take it home to do. In many cases they take in sewing or dress-making, and do tailoring for the wholesale trade at their homes.

In Toronto during a greater part of the year there is a large student population gathered from all parts of the province, and accommodation for them needs to be ample, as well as for many other young men and women who find employment away from their homes; so that taking in boarders is a frequent resource for married women who have homes but need to increase their income.

As yet there seems no need for special legislation in the Factories' Act on behalf of married women as in more thickly populated countries.

### CHAPTER IV.—HOMES FOR WORKING WOMEN.

About one-fourth of the women employed in various occupations in Toronto have come from other parts of the province and are obliged to board in one way or another. The majority of girls who board find rooms in private families at prices varying from \$2.25 and \$2.50 up to \$5. Girls who get their meals at their places of business, as in restaurants, can get room and Sunday board for \$1.50. At the Young Women's Christian Association rooms girls may get board for \$2.25 and \$2.50, and are allowed to do their own washing, which is "quite a consideration." For the benefit of girls who cannot go home to dinner while at work, the Girls' Institute on Richmond St. provides meal tickets for dinner at the rate of six for fifty cents, a cup of tea being three cents extra. Regular board may be obtained here for the same prices as at the Association rooms. A new building, now in course of erection by the Young Women's Christian Association, is expected to give accommodation to an increased number of girls who are obliged to board.

A "King's Daughters'" boarding house has also been started, which at present accommodates fifteen girls. It is really a kind of co-operative house-keeping. All the boarders are King's Daughters, and it is self-supporting. The prices for weekly board are from \$2.25 to \$3 according to accommodation. This scheme is capable of considerable extension, and it is to be hoped that many more such boarding houses will be started.

The fact that many girls in employment in Toronto live at home and are able to accept small wages makes it rather difficult for those girls who are obliged to board to command good salaries, if they are not especially experienced or competent. Some do not find it possible to pay even \$2.25 a week; for in many cases, as can be seen by the wages given, they do not get more than \$3 a week. Sometimes two girls will board together and get a room for \$1 a week. By buying meal tickets they get their dinners for \$1 a week, and then they cook their own breakfasts, teas and Sunday dinner. In one case this could be done for 75 cents a week, so that the total cost of board for the two girls was \$2.75 a week, or \$1.37½ for each. This is, perhaps, barely living; but where the total income was \$6 a week for all expenses economy was inevitable.

In another case where a girl earned \$3 a week she was obliged to spend it almost all in food for herself, mother and two sisters. The earnings of the mother as a sick nurse went to pay for rent, fuel and clothing. The carefully estimated expenditure for one week would average as follows, allowing slight differences for different seasons:—

Bread (14 cents a large loaf)....	\$0 85	Potatoes .....	\$0 15
Oatmeal .....	25	Currants (for bread pudding)....	6
Milk (6 cents a quart) .....	42	Coal oil .....	10
Sugar .....	10	Soap and salt .....	10
Butter (good) .....	20	Insurance (10 cents each) .....	40
Lard .....	12		
Meat .....	25	Total .....	\$3 00

The item for insurance seems large; but as saving was impossible they felt safer in knowing that in case of accident or sickness money would be forthcoming. It was also felt that the best food was really the most economical in the end, so that cheapness was not attempted.

Girls who are out of work may obtain board at the rooms of the Y. W. C. Association, and also at the Woman's Night Shelter at 40 Centre Ave. It has long been felt that some place was needed where girls without money could go in case of emergencies; and at the last place mentioned an attempt has been made to supply this need. It is to be hoped that its efforts may be as successful in the future as they are at present.

The Y. W. C. Guild in Toronto have been instrumental in providing a "Rest" on Toronto Island during the summer months for girls who wish to board there while they have their holidays, or even while continuing their employment in the city. Through the kindness of well-wishers houses have been obtained rent free, and the other expenses have been met by charging the nominal charge of \$1 and \$1.50 a week for board. During the summer of 1890 one hundred and fifteen girls in all took advantage of this opportunity for getting a rest and change of air. In 1891 only one house was used, but it was full to overflowing. One large dry goods firm in Toronto, which employs many girls, established a summer home in Muskoka during the summer of 1891 for saleswomen in their holidays. This is an example which ought to be imitated.

## CHAPTER V.—TRADES UNIONS AND WOMEN'S SOCIETIES.

1. *Trades Unions.*

Trades unions of women in Ontario have not been numerous nor remarkably successful; but still they have been formed at various times. In a number of cases, also, women have joined the men's unions. In Hamilton, Kingston and Toronto, Assemblies of the Knights of Labour have at various times been formed of women alone; but at present none seem to be active.

In Toronto as far back as 1883 a union was formed among telegraphers; and women were asked to join as well as men. A strike organized by them having failed, the union was for the time dissolved.

About 1885 an Assembly of the Knights of Labour was organized of women in various occupations. It was called "Hope Assembly," and lasted for some time, but finally succumbed.

About 1888-9 the "Silver Fleece" Assembly was formed, composed of women in the tailoring business. It is not now active.

In 1889 the corset-makers organized an Assembly to carry on a strike to resist a reduction of wages. A compromise is said to have been effected; and the assembly has ceased to exist. Women belong at present to the cigar-makers and typographical unions, but their numbers are so few that practically women are not a factor in trades unions or Knights of Labour assemblies at present in Toronto at all.

The non-success of trades unions among women is partly attributable to the same causes as the but limited success of such movements among men in Canada and America generally. Both men and women in various trades in Canada are always looking forward to bettering their condition in some way, and do not expect their connection with a trade to be permanent. This is particularly the case among those who are apt to be the leading spirits in the movements. Women, moreover, have in the past lacked the training necessary to carry on such unions, and were often altogether ignorant of the nature of labour combinations. And again, since women on the whole do not remain long in employment, benefit and superannuation schemes in connection with the unions were not much appreciated. Moreover there does not exist that "class spirit" among women in employments that is necessary to organized progress; and men with reason complain that it is difficult to operate plans of any sort which require unselfish action among large bodies of women.

There is no doubt that in unions among men and women employed at the same trade, where equal wages are demanded, the women gradually become fewer and finally drop out, if they are physically unfit for as severe labour as the men; and they know in such cases that it is not to their individual advantage to belong to the unions. Where equal pay is demanded for equal labour, the "survival of the fittest" is alone possible.

2. *Working Women's Societies.*

Although trades unions among women have not been successful so far in Ontario, it is not to be assumed that women are unsuccessful in uniting themselves together in clubs and societies of other kinds. In fact the formation of women's clubs for various objects seems to be one of the most noticeable movements of the present day.

About seven years ago a movement was set on foot in New York to establish a working girls' society governed by the working girls themselves, for social, intellectual and moral purposes. A working girl's society as defined by its members is, "an organization formed among busy women and girls, to secure by co-operation means of self-improvement, opportunities for social intercourse, and the development of higher noble aims. It is governed by the members for the members, and strives to be self-supporting." In Toronto some years ago it became evident to those who had at heart the welfare of girls, particularly those in business positions, that associations, however good, formed on a charitable basis, were not far-reaching enough in their

aims to meet the needs of those girls who were anxious for self-improvement. And in 1886 a Young Women's Christian Guild was organized which aims at promoting the spiritual, moral, intellectual, social and physical welfare of young women. Those who organized it were anxious to work *with* not *for* the members. All young women of good character are eligible for membership on payment of a fee of \$1 per annum, paid annually or in quarterly instalments. After four years successful work the present parlours of the guild have become inadequate; and a large new building has been erected by the aid of subscriptions, on McGill Street, which is to be occupied in 1892. At present the active membership is nearly three hundred. A most important feature of the work, besides the regular meetings in which all the members take part, is the provision of a number of classes for instruction. Both teachers and taught are guild members, so that no fees are asked except for the gymnasium class, which is obliged to ask a fee of fifty cents. Classes exist in music, vocal and instrumental, in book-keeping, shorthand, dressmaking, drawing, painting, fancy work, and the various branches of an English education. The dressmaking class is particularly helpful to those who find it necessary to make their own dresses. There are several teachers in each department; and, as the work progresses, those who started as pupils assist as teachers. The only salaried office is that of the secretary, who takes charge of the parlours and attends to the business generally. Girls are assisted in finding employment and in obtaining boarding houses. The regular meetings have always some special feature of interest prepared for them—lectures, essays, missionary addresses, medical talks, socials, etc. The parlours are used by the members at all times of the day; members who cannot go home at noon from their places of business bring their lunch; and on Monday evening those who have not time to go home before the meeting have a tea in the parlours. The Silver Cross Circle of King's Daughters are all guild members. It is to them that the success of the boarding house has been due; and they also publish in connection with the Guild a monthly magazine called *The Gazette*, which is furnished to the members for twenty-five cents a year.

A branch guild has been started in the east end of the city for those living there, and it is to be expected that others will be needed as the work increases.

One reason for the remarkable success of the guild's work is that it satisfies that desire for self-culture and self-improvement which many have often been unable to satisfy for want of opportunity. It recognises no class distinctions. Those who have superior talents, wealth or leisure, use them for the benefit of those who have not; none are so poor that they cannot comfort and cheer less fortunate ones, and none so rich that they cannot learn lessons of self-sacrifice and patience from the lives of those less fortunate.

Where trades unions fail, such associations as this will succeed in advancing the cause of woman. The sisterhood of the society will extend itself to the work room; where too often needless and harmful distinctions exist even between co-workers.

There is room for such guilds and associations in every town and village in Ontario, where they do not already exist. The methods of self-government and self-support among the girls themselves will do much to improve their condition in employment. They will learn how they can best promote their own interests and those of their fellow workers. Mutual benefit clubs and saving societies should form not the least important part of the work of the guilds.

## CHAPTER VI.—THE FUTURE.

It is to such organizations as these guilds that those who are looking forward to an amelioration of the present condition of working women, turn for help. It is evident that much can be done by women themselves among themselves towards this end. If women are to improve their condition they must know what that condition is and why it needs improving; they must realise the position they occupy as wage earners, in the complicated and intricate structure of modern civilized society; they must ascertain what tendencies are

at work in their particular employment ; they must feel that it is their duty to strive to prevent such tendencies as are inimical to their welfare and consequently to the welfare of the human race ; and they must seek to discover what are the best means of bringing this about. To the attainment of such knowledge much education is yet necessary ; and in the giving and gaining of this education, much individual self-sacrifice may be needed. " Looking not each of you on his own things, but each of you also on the things of others." In the struggle for existence women must recognize that, whatever they are or may become intellectually, physically they are not and never will be men ; and in seeking occupations, unlimited competition with men is not desirable. This fact is often lost sight of by those who, regardless of results, urge the indiscriminate opening of all employments to women. It is often disregarded by the women themselves, who seek and submit to employment for which they are or evidently become physically incapable. True, restrictive measures of any kind are not apt to be popular, but they may nevertheless be expedient. To debar women from particular employments or to place certain restrictions on them seems to be a step backwards instead of in advance ; but it may be so only in seeming.

A girl who had lost her health, and finally was obliged to give up her situation on account of continuous application to work, which, after some years' experience, proved beyond her strength, said to me, " We do not know at the time and do not believe that we are over-exerting ourselves." Isolated cases of women having shown themselves able to stand a severe physical strain cannot refute the fact that a vast majority of women are of weaker mould than men, and that over-work has in many cases been the cause of a life of semi-invalidism. It is nothing short of criminal to permit, let alone to exact, an undue exertion of physical strength from women ; and it is the duty of the Government to prevent it. That women are willing, nay, even anxious sometimes, to attempt hard physical labour, is no reason for their being permitted to do so.

Another result of the indiscriminate and extensive employment of women is increasing danger to the life of the home. It is generally conceded that the family is the great safe-guard of a nation's prosperity, and anything which would endanger it cannot but be looked on with disfavour and even alarm. What does the displacing of men by the competition of women at lower wages mean if not that the former often find employment more difficult to obtain or less profitable than formerly, and are less able to provide means of maintenance for a family ? Man was intended by nature to be the bread-winner of the family ; and if family life is to be maintained such he must remain : so that the persistent usurpation of his place by unfair competition must mean eventually a danger to the continuance of the home. Let women, when they wish to compete with men, meet them on fair ground by demanding equal remuneration.

It is true that under the present condition of things many women find employment of some kind necessary for their support, and for such let the field of labour be as wide as is consistent with their physical ability. But it is the duty of those who accept low wages because they are not entirely dependent on themselves, to remember that in so doing they are making it more difficult for those who really are obliged to support themselves to obtain remunerative employment.

In discussing the occupations of women in this paper no reference has been made to certain learned professions or other like careers which of late years have been entered by women along with men. Such occupations have not been considered as coming within the scope of the present enquiry, since they are independent of any legislative control, and questions regarding competitive wages or low wages do not arise with regard to them. Whether they ought to be included within woman's sphere of labour or not seems largely a matter of custom and prejudice. If the entering of such professions or the holding of such positions can tend in any way to aid in the general improvement of the women wage-earners as a whole, that of itself is a sufficient reason why women should do so.

Whatever hopes for the future exist among the well-wishers for women wage-earners in Ontario, much can be done in the immediate present for their benefit in the way of

legislation. For this end the following amendments and extensions of the Factory and Shops' Regulation Acts have been suggested in this paper :—

1. The clause limiting the places included in the Factory Act to those employing at least six persons should be struck out.
2. Mercantile and mechanical establishments where women are employed should be included in the provisions of the Factory Act.
3. The employment of boys under fourteen should be prohibited ; and that of all boys and girls under sixteen in those factories which are considered dangerous.
4. The number of hours per week should be reduced from sixty to fifty-five, so that nine hours a day shall be the maximum, or else that there shall be a half holiday on some day of the week.
5. The period of one hour for a noon-day meal should be compulsory for employés.
6. Night work for women should be definitely prohibited.
7. The section of the Shops' Regulation Act, regarding seats for females, should be extended to those in factories and offices, and no girl under sixteen should be allowed to engage in any employment which necessitates her standing.
8. Inspection should be provided so as to make the Shops' Regulation Act effective.

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